

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, JULY 25, 2005

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Chatterjee, Kreider, Raser, and Wallace present. Absent: Bloomfield, Kirk, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt and Sullebarger.

The Board failed to achieve a quorum. At the request of the applicants, the Board agreed to conduct a preliminary design review on the two projects seeking Certificates of Appropriateness and zoning variances and to continue the review at a special meeting on August 1, 2005 where a formal vote could be taken.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, HILLSIDE REVIEW & ZONING VARIANCES, FOR 542 MILTON STREET, PARKING PAD AND FENCE, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Urban Conservator William Forwood presented a report on a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new parking pad structure with a garden shed below at the rear of the property facing Boal Street and to construct a 6' vinyl privacy fence along the west side property line. The proposed parking pad structure and the fence in the front yard require zoning variances.

Mr. Forwood indicated that the guidelines for the Prospect Hill Historic District do not specifically address parking pads, but the general guidelines state that site improvements should be compatible with the district. Fence guidelines simply prohibit wood or chain link on street frontage. Given the steep slope of the site, only the top of the pad would be visible from the public way. The proposed fence would be visible from Boal Street, but staff finds there is justification for the fence because it screens the new parking pad. Staff suggested that the fence be painted wood and not vinyl.

Brandon Keenan representing the owner Charles Mosher was present to answer questions from the Board. He confirmed that the sheathing on the shed will be a cementitious board rather than the T-111 siding shown on the plans. Mr. Keenan stated that the vinyl fencing proposed is of high quality and would match the fence that already exists on the property line.

Ms. Wallace referenced a note included in the staff report from Mr. Bob Tate a neighbor at 544 Milton Street stating his concerns that the proposed construction would provide easy access to the roof of his garage and would create a security problem. Mr. Raser voiced concern about the six-inch gap between the new pad and the neighboring garage. He suggested the gap be narrowed for safety and that the pad be fitted with a curb to provide proper drainage.

BOARD ACTION

The Board unanimously agreed to table this application (motion by Mr. Raser, Mr. Chatterjee second) until the matter could be officially heard and voted upon a special meeting on August 1, 2005.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, HILLSIDE AND ZONING VARIANCES FOR 427 & 431 MILTON STREET PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. Forwood presented an application to build a new single-family house at 431 Milton Street. The house will be built on a corner lot created by the consolidation and subdivision of three existing lots, one of which contains a residence at 427 Milton Street. The new construction will require zoning variances for the front, rear and side yard setbacks as well as variances for its height. An existing off-street parking space on 431 Milton will be relocated to 427 Milton; it will

require a zoning variance to be constructed within the front yard setback. 427 Milton is a contributing building in the historic district; both properties are within a Hillside Overlay District.

The new residence at 431 Milton will be three stories high with a two-car garage accessed from Cumber Street and have two south-facing decks. The house will be principally of brick on a concrete foundation, have sash windows with stone/concrete lintels, paneled doors and wood/fipon trim. The new parking pad at 427 Milton will be concrete on a low retaining wall.

Project developer Doug Spitz was present to answer questions from the Board. Mr. Spitz confirmed that he agreed to consider recommendations from staff to install thin painted steel deck railings rather than wood to lessen the visual impact on the rear elevation. He said that staff's recommendation that the foundation wall be faced in synthetic stone was cost prohibitive. Mr. Raser indicated that other details and materials (such as garage doors) need to be provided and suggested that additional windows be added to the east wall to reflect that this is a corner building.

Mr. Forwood reported that a property owner on the north side of Milton Street had expressed concern that her views would be negatively impacted by the new building, so she had objected to its height. Mr. Forwood distributed photographs submitted by that owner. He also read from the Hillside development standards which require that views from public viewing places be respected; however, they do not reference views from a private residence. Mr. Raser suggested that a section diagram of the street showing view lines and the impact of the new construction would assist the Board in determining the effect of the proposed house.

Ms. Wallace observed that Milton Street is a place where people chose to live because of the view and that she is concerned that the height of the proposed structure would obstruct the view of the neighbors. Even though the Board is to consider views from the public way, she felt that the private property owner/residents' view is important. In response, Mr. Spitz said that the height for the structure was chosen to maximize living space on a small site and to make the home affordable. He said the height of the structure is in part determined by the grade of Cumber Street that dictates the elevation of the garage floors. Mr. Kreider suggested that the garage could be accommodated in part under the rear deck and thereby allowing the garage floors to be lowered relative to Cumber Street.

Ms. Christine Boehr resident of 426 Milton presented additional photos to the Board. She said that she does not have a problem with the new home and she welcomes people to the neighborhood, but the proposed three-story structure would obstruct her view and affect her quality of living. She asked that the Board not grant approval for the height of the building as presented.

BOARD ACTION

The Board unanimously agreed to table this application (motion by Mr. Raser, Mr. Chatterjee second) until the matter could be officially heard and voted upon a special meeting on August 1, 2005.

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION, FASHION FROCKS, 3301 COLERAIN AVENUE, CAMP WASHINGTON

Mr. Forwood presented a staff report on a National Register nomination for Fashion Frocks, Inc. prepared and submitted by Middle Earth Properties which is developing plans to convert the complex to residential use. Its listing will qualify the property for federal tax credits for a certified rehabilitation. The Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board will consider the

nomination at its meeting on August 5, 2005. As Certified Local Government, the City of Cincinnati is asked to comment on pending nominations.

The Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex is significant under Criterion A for its historical associations with Cincinnati's ready-made clothing industry. Between 1935 and 1957, Fashion Frocks ranked among Cincinnati's foremost twentieth century dress manufacturers and was a national leader in the direct sales and marketing of women's apparel. Mr. Forwood reminded the Board that the site is being nominated for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, not for its architecture.

Staff feels that the Fashion Frocks, Inc. Complex meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register. Board member Judith Spraul-Schmidt indicated her support of the nomination in an e-mail to staff, stating that while the building complex is unremarkable, the business history is important and noteworthy.

Mr. Kreider asked whether most of the original façade was still standing; Mr. Forwood answered that most of the complex still survives, though altered. In answer to Mr. Chatterjee, Mr. Forwood said that National Register listing in itself would not guarantee the preservation of the complex, but that the developer would be required to meet the Secretary of Interior standards for the rehabilitation as part of the Tax Act review.

BOARD ACTION

The Board unanimously (motion by Mr. Raser, Mr. Chatterjee second) to take the following action:

1. Find that the Fashion Frocks, Inc. Complex, located at 3301 Colerain Avenue/1326 Monmouth Avenue in Camp Washington, meets the requirements of Criterion A for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and
2. Direct staff to forward the Board's findings regarding this nomination to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office prior to the August 5, 2005 meeting of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board..

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____